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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 17 June 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to have to draw your attention to the critical and tense situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine — as a result of Israel's relentless provocations and illegal actions against the Palestinian people. Israel continues to carry out grave violations of international law, including the killing and injury of Palestinian civilians by means of excessive force; military raids and mass arrests and detentions, including of children; illegal settlement construction and expansion; demolitions of Palestinian homes and properties, including those belonging to Palestinian Bedouin communities; extrajudicial executions; and incessant provocations and incitement by occupying forces against the Palestinian people and their holy places. These actions have continued and escalated in the recent period, further inflicting loss of life, loss of property and suffering on the Palestinian civilian population, and threatening to destabilize the already fragile situation on the ground.

First, I regret to have to call to your attention the critical and alarming situation of Palestinian political prisoners illegally imprisoned and detained by Israel, the occupying Power, which continues to be grave and warrants immediate attention. As was mentioned in my letter of 5 June 2014 (A/ES-10/630-S/2014/396), more than one hundred detainees and prisoners are participating in a hunger strike in peaceful protest of their captivity and the widespread abuses perpetrated against them by the occupying Power. Many of them, who have now been on a hunger strike for 55 days, are in serious or critical condition, including many Palestinians who have been held in solitary confinement, another unlawful form of punishment flagrantly used by Israel against Palestinian civilians in its prisons.

Serious efforts must be made by the international community to compel Israel to comply with international law, including humanitarian law, specifically article 76

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of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which clearly defines the rights of protected persons faced with detention by an occupying Power. The international community must ensure that the occupying Power acts humanely towards the peaceful, non-violent prisoners on hunger strike and to cease all illegal practices, including torture and solitary confinement. We continue to call for their immediate release, along with all other Palestinians being unlawfully and arbitrarily imprisoned and detained. In this regard, we welcome the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressing concern over the deteriorating health of the Palestinian prisoners and detainees who have been on hunger strike and his call upon Israel to comply with its international human rights obligations in this regard.

I wish to turn your attention to the recent violations against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. In this regard, the Israeli occupying forces have continued to carry out missile air strikes and artillery bombardment of civilian areas in the Gaza Strip in grave violation of international law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, deliberately targeting and killing Palestinian civilians.

On Wednesday, 11 June 2014, Israeli occupying forces fired a missile at two passengers who were riding on a motorbike, instantly killing one passenger, Ahmad Al-Awour, 20 years old, and seriously injuring many others. Tragically, one of the injured was an innocent bystander in the vicinity of the attack, Ali Abd Al-Latif, 7 years old, who died on Saturday, 14 June, of wounds that he sustained as a result of the attack. Moreover, the military campaign and artillery bombardment of civilian areas in the Gaza Strip continued throughout the night of Monday, 16 June, injuring several more people and causing both destruction of civilian properties and the spread of panic and terror among the Palestinian population in the besieged Gaza Strip.

In the occupied West Bank, Israel, the occupying Power, has intensified its illegal measures and collective punishment directed against the Palestinian people, following an incident, on Friday, 13 June, where three settlers went missing while hitchhiking from the so-called settlement of Kfar Etzion, which is located between Jerusalem and Al-Khalil (Hebron). Since then, the occupying Power has embarked upon a violent and brutal campaign of repression, which has included mass arrests and mass closures throughout the occupied West Bank. In this regard, more than 200 Palestinians, including members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, have been arrested by the occupying forces. Furthermore, as a result of their excessive and indiscriminate use of force, Ahmad Al-Sabarin, 20 years old, was killed by occupying forces as the result of a gunshot wound to the chest during a military raid of Al-Jalazun refugee camp north of Ramallah, on Sunday, 15 June. The State of Palestine condemns all acts that result in the further destabilization of the situation on the ground and the escalation of violence, including measures of collective punishment and the use of force against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in connection with the three missing Israeli settlers. We call upon the international community to call upon the occupying Power to cease its actions of mass closures and mass arrests throughout the occupied West Bank and to cease all forms of collective punishment and human rights violations directed against the Palestinian people.

Moreover, while the Palestinian leadership is doing its utmost to prevent further escalation of the volatile situation on the ground, including helping with the search for the three missing Israeli settlers, it must be reiterated that Israel, the occupying Power, bears full responsibility for the safety and security of those of its civilians that it has illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is the law that governs military occupation.

I must also point to the recent and ongoing illegal actions and incitement thereof by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy places, which are stoking religious sensitivities, particularly at Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary), which houses the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and Qubbat al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock). Following Friday prayer, on 13 June, Israeli occupying forces stormed the compound, attacking Palestinian worshippers with stun grenades, pepper gas and rubber-coated steel bullets, and beat worshippers with batons, as well as injured ambulance crews and journalists. Shrapnel from the occupying forces' stun grenades injured 28 Palestinians, including elderly worshippers. We continue to caution that further provocations will only inflame already high tensions and anger among the Palestinian population, posing the threat of a complete destabilization of the situation on the ground.

In addition to the above, Israel has also persisted in continuing with its construction of settlements and the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Just this past week, Israel, the occupying Power, proceeded with plans to further expand settlements by constructing 1,083 settlement units in the occupied West Bank, including in occupied East Jerusalem. This latest provocative and illegal plan comes on the heels of the announcement made last week of the construction and expansion of an additional 1,500 settlement units. We condemn all such provocative and illegal colonization measures, which are physically destroying the basis for the two-State solution, and we reiterate the demand that Israel completely cease all settlement activities and comply with the relevant provisions of international law and United Nations resolutions. We must reiterate the fact that such Israeli policies and actions, systematically and wilfully pursued, are illegal and constitute war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention and under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Moreover, in connection with Israel's settlement campaign, we condemn the intensification of measures taken against Palestinian Bedouin communities in the central occupied West Bank, which are being targeted by the occupying Power in order that it may carry out plans for further settlement construction. We call upon the international community to oblige the occupying Power to put a halt to all Israeli measures against the Palestinian Bedouin communities, including by ending its demolition of structures, and confiscation of their property, as well as their forced eviction and forced transfer, which are prohibited under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The above-mentioned violations compel the Palestinian leadership to call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to uphold the rule of law and human rights and demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease its military aggression against the Palestinian people, respect their human rights, and comply with all of its legal obligations under international law. The international

community cannot continue absolving Israel of its responsibility for these violations and of its obligations under international law as an occupying Power. The international community must send forthwith the strong, unequivocal message that it rejects Israel's illegal policies, intransigence and constant attempts to completely sabotage any real chance that still exists to realize the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 497 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 5 June 2014 (A/ES-10/630-S/2014/396) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations